

U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 7
901 N. 5th STREET
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66101

BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATOR

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AGENCY-REGION VII
REGIONAL HEARING CLERK

In the Matter of

CHUCK KUHNEL AND ROBYN KUHNEL
Valporaiso, Nebraska

Respondents

Docket No. TSCA-07-2004-0241

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 7 and Chuck Kuhnel and Robyn Kuhnel (Respondents) have agreed to a settlement of this action before filing of a complaint, and thus this action is simultaneously commenced and concluded pursuant to Rules 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, Issuance of Compliance or Corrective Action Orders, and the Revocation, Termination or Suspension of Permits (Consolidated Rules), 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

Jurisdiction

1. This proceeding is an administrative action for the assessment of civil penalties instituted pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), 15 U.S.C. § 2615(a).
2. This Consent Agreement and Final Order serves as notice that EPA has reason to believe that Respondents have violated Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689, by failing to comply with the regulatory requirements of 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart F, *Disclosure of Known Lead-Based Paint and/or Lead-Based Paint Hazards Upon Sale or Lease of Residential Property*, promulgated pursuant to Section 1018 of the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992, 42 U.S.C. § 4852d.

Parties

3. The Complainant, by delegation from the Administrator of the EPA, is the Chief, Radiation, Asbestos Lead and Indoor Programs Branch, EPA, Region 7.

4. The Respondents are Chuck Kuhnel and Robyn Kuhnel, 2210 - 168th Road, Valparaiso, Nebraska 68065.

Statutory and Regulatory Background

5. Congress passed the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act of 1992 (the Act), 42 U.S.C. §§ 4851 to 4856, to address the need to control exposure to lead-based paint hazards. The Act amended TSCA by adding Sections 401 to 412, 15 U.S.C. §§ 2681 to 2692. Section 1018 of the Act required EPA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to jointly issue regulations requiring the disclosure of known lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards by persons selling or leasing housing constructed before the phaseout of residential lead-based paint use in 1978. The regulations, issued March 6, 1996, and codified at 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart F, require that sellers and lessors of most residential housing built before 1978: a) disclose the presence of known lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards in the target housing; b) provide purchasers and lessees with any available records or reports pertaining to the presence of lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards; c) provide purchasers and lessees with a federally approved lead hazard information pamphlet; d) provide purchasers with a 10-day opportunity to conduct a risk assessment or inspection for the presence of lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards before the purchaser is obligated under any purchase contract; and e) include certain disclosure and acknowledgment language in the sales or leasing contract. The failure or refusal to comply with the regulations is a violation of Section 1018 of the Act and Section 409 of TSCA.

Alleged Violations

6. The Complainant hereby states and alleges that Respondents have violated TSCA and federal regulations promulgated thereunder, as follows:

Count 1

7. Respondents are, and were at all times referred to herein, "persons" within the meaning of TSCA.

8. Respondents are the "lessors" as that term is defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.103, of property at 508-514 North 6th Street, Seward, Nebraska 68434.

9. The property referenced above is "target housing" as that term is defined by 40 C.F.R. § 745.103.

10. Information collected shows that Respondents entered into a contract to lease 508-514 North 6th Street, Seward, Nebraska 68434, in or around December 2001.

11. Information collected shows that Respondents failed to provide the lessee with an EPA-approved lead hazard information pamphlet before the lessee was obligated under a contract to lease target housing.

12. Respondents' failure to provide an EPA-approved lead hazard information pamphlet is a violation of 40 C.F.R. § 745.107(a)(1) and, in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 745.118(e), a violation of Section 1018 of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 4852d, and Section 409 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2689, and thus Respondents are subject to civil penalties under Section 16 of TSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 2615.

CONSENT AGREEMENT

13. For purposes of this proceeding, Respondents admit the jurisdictional allegations set forth above.

14. Respondents admit the factual allegations set forth above.

15. Respondents waive their right to a judicial or administrative hearing on any issue of fact or law set forth above and their right to appeal the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement.

16. Respondents and EPA agree to conciliate this matter without the necessity of a formal hearing and to bear their respective costs and attorneys' fees.

17. Respondents certify by the signing of this Consent Agreement and Final Order that to the best of Respondents' knowledge, they are presently in compliance with all requirements of 40 C.F.R. Part 745, Subpart F.

18. Respondents consent to the issuance of the Final Order hereinafter recited and consents to the payment of a mitigated civil penalty in the amount of Five Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$550) to be paid within thirty (30) days of the effective date of the Final Order.

19. Respondents understand that their failure to timely pay any portion of the mitigated civil penalty stated in Paragraph 18 above, may result in the commencement of a civil action in Federal District Court to recover the full remaining balance, along with penalties, late payment handling charges, and accumulated interest. In such case, interest shall accrue thereon at the applicable statutory rate on the unpaid balance until such civil penalty and any accrued interest are paid in full. A late payment handling charge of \$15 will be imposed after thirty (30) days and an additional \$15 will be charge for each subsequent thirty (30) day period. Additionally, as provided by 31 U.S.C. § 3717(e)(2), a six percent (6%) per annum penalty (late charge) may be assessed on any amount not paid within ninety (90) days of the due date.

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to the provisions of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), 15 U.S.C.

§§ 2601-2692, and based upon the information set forth in the Consent Agreement accompanying this

Final Order, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:**

1. Respondents shall pay a mitigated civil penalty of Five Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$550) within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this Final Order. Such payment shall identify the Respondents by name and docket number and shall be by certified or cashier's check made payable to the "United States Treasury" and sent to:

EPA-Region 7
c/o Mellon Bank
P.O. Box 360748M
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15251.

2. A copy of the check shall simultaneously be sent to the following:

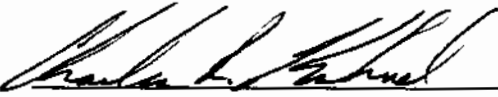
Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 7
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101; and

Deanna Smith
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 7
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101.

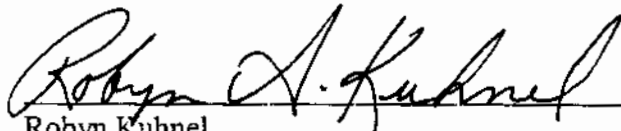
3. Respondents and Complainant shall each bear their own costs and attorneys' fees incurred as a result of this matter.

RESPONDENTS
CHUCK KUHNEL AND ROBYN KUHNEL

Date: 5-19-04


By: 
Chuck Kuhnel

Date: 5-19-04


By: 
Robyn Kuhnel

COMPLAINANT
U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Date: 7/8/04

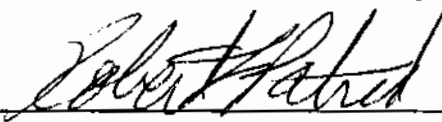
By: 
Lynn M. Slugantz, Acting Branch Chief
Radiation, Asbestos, Lead and Indoor Programs Branch

Date: 7/8/04

By: 
Kent Johnson, Senior Assistant Regional Counsel
Office of Regional Counsel

IT IS SO ORDERED. This Order shall become effective immediately.

Date: July 12, 2004


ROBERT L. PATRICK
Regional Judicial Officer
EPA, Region 7

IN THE MATTER OF Chuck Kuhnel and Robyn Kuhnel, Respondents
Docket No. TSCA-07-2004-0241

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was sent this day in the following manner to the addressees:


Copy hand delivered to
Attorney for Complainant:

Kent Johnson
Senior Assistant Regional Counsel
Region VII
United States Environmental Protection Agency
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

Copy by U.S. Certified Mail,
Return Receipt Requested, to:

Stephen D. Mossman
Mattson, Ricketts, Davies, Stewart & Calkins
134 S. 13th Street, Suite 1200
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

Dated: 7/12/04


Kathy Robinson
Regional Hearing Clerk